

ROBERT BELL ROSS, JR., AND  
ELLA ALEXANDER ROSS



Robert Bell Ross Jr., was born January 22, 1857, Paisley, Renfrewshire, Scotland. Son of Robert Bell Ross and Elizabeth Wright. Married Ella Gertrude Alexander 1881. Died February 7, 1946, in Salt Lake City.

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*Blacksmith*

*Robert Bell Ross Jr. = pioneer, teacher, farmer, miner, Justice of Peace, Midway Town Board*

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HOW BEAUTIFUL UPON THE MOUNTAINS

Ella Gertrude Alexander Ross, born January 1, 1863, East Mill Creek, Salt Lake County. Daughter of Alvah Jedathan Alexander and Elizabeth Soule. Married Robert Bell Ross, Jr., 1881. Died October 25, 1931, in Midway.

When Robert was but a few months old his parents and maternal grandparents took him to Liverpool, England, from where they set sail on the ship Tuscarora for the land of America. They arrived safely about mid July at Philadelphia. 1857

From 1857 to 1862, his parents lived and labored in several states. They had joined The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in their native land, but had to remain in the east to secure means to go on to Utah. They reached the Salt Lake Valley in the fall of 1863. Then they moved to Virginia City, Nevada, for a few years. In the fall of 1872 the family returned to Utah and settled in Midway. Here they established a home where they resided the rest of their lives.

\* Robert taught school, farmed, also worked in the mines of Park City. He loved to mingle with the young people. He was especially fond of dancing and dramatics. In civil capacity he served as Justice of the Peace for many years. He was a director of the Midway Town Board and was President of the Midway Irrigation Company.

Ella Alexander was the fifth child and third daughter of eleven children born to her parents.

Her first year in school was in Mill Creek, but when she was seven she moved with her parents to Midway. She taught school during the winters of 1880 and 1881. When the 1881 school year ended she was married to Robert Bell Ross being then eighteen years of age.

Ella Alexander Ross was an ardent church worker in most of the auxiliary organizations. She was a member of the Daughters of the Utah Pioneers. She was President of the MIA and a teacher in Relief Society. She made temple clothes and helped with the sick. She was an outstanding church and civic worker. Both are buried in the Midway Cemetery.

Children of Robert and Ella Ross:  
Mrs. George Augustus (Elizabeth) Huntington;

Robert Bell III, died in infancy;  
Mrs. Claude Edwin (Effie Ardell) Willis;

Alvah Alexander, married Jennie A. Eperson;

Adelbert, married (1) Helen Baldwin (2)

Sarah Hollinger Gentry;

Frederic, died at birth;

Wilbur Claude, died;

Lorin Dee, married (1) Juanita Burgener (2) Freda Frye.

*Ella Alexander Ross =  
pioneer, school teacher 1880-1,  
cared for sick,*



A group of early settlers in front of the  
Old Ross Blacksmith Shop in Midway.



A group of early settlers in front of the  
Old Ross Blacksmith Shop in Midway.

*Edna  
Myrtle  
Gladys  
Helen  
John  
Mary*

notes that were supplied in 1912. The mixture was at the right consistency, it was taken from the mixing box, put into the wooden molds and leveled. These raw brick were then stacked with air space between each brick. Among the piles of brick, fire boxes or trenches were built, running about two feet apart. Fires were built in these trenches and kept burning continuously for three days and nights, or until the bricks were dry.

Indicative of the hard work involved in making brick is this note from the books of Henry Van Wagoner. Mr. Van Wagoner kept the time of his employees in a note book, and wrote after the name of one man: "One very, very hard days work for Henry Van Wagoner for only two dollars."

The Midway brick yards operated for many years, furnishing materials for such buildings as Wasatch High School which was built in 1912, homes such as the Nelson's by the railroad tracks, Bonner's, James, Ritchie's in Charleston, Streets, George Johnson's and Coleman's. The Henry T. Coleman home built by John Watkins is said to be the first brick house built in the valley.

Some of the more prominent brick makers through the years have been Lloyd Provost, Theophilus Epperson, Angus and Lawrence Epperson and Louis Coleman and E. Luke Provost.

### BLACKSMITHS in Midway

Tools for horses and oxen, wagon and buggy tires, sharpened and tempered, plow shares and drills and picks were just a few of the essentials needed by early settlers of Midway. For these necessities they looked to the blacksmiths of the community.

Fires of the huge forges would often glow late into the night and the sparks would ring as the blacksmiths worked to keep the farmers ready for another day's work. Services were usually paid for in produce, exchanged labor or whatever means of exchange was most readily available.

Those who were most prominent in the early blacksmith industry included Henry Alexander, Joseph Nelson, John Wright, Henry T. Coleman, Robert Krebs, Samuel (Sam) Hair, Robert Ross, Ernest White, J. E. Spranger and William Gibson. Mr. Gibson operated the last blacksmith shop in the community.

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